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Seasons Greetings To All and... Welcome to a New Year Dedicated to Children

Throughout the world, people will be paying tribute to children during 1979, the International Year of the Child. It is a time to renew our commitment to the nutritional well-being of all children. **Page 2**

Parents Can Make A Difference

There's a lot of talk about school food these days. Here's how some parents have gotten involved to make sure school food service is what they want it to be. **Page 4**

A Little Imagination Goes a Long Way

Schools have found imaginative and inexpensive ways to make their cafeterias colorful, attractive and fun. **Page 9**

Meeting the Special Needs Of Migrants

This year, the Food and Nutrition Service has been testing ways to better meet the nutritional needs of migrant farmworking mothers and children. **Page 11.**



Seasons Greetings To All and...

Welcome
to a
New Year
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Children



In 1979, people all over the world will be paying tribute to a very special population of one and a half billion—

the world's children. Working through the United Nations and on their own, countries will be evaluating the needs of children and looking for ways to better meet those needs.

In the United States, major atten-

tion will be given to nutrition and the role of domestic food assistance in helping to insure the well-being of children.

Over the last 10 years, domestic food assistance has expanded dramatically. Millions of American children are now getting nutritious breakfasts and lunches at school, provided with the help of Federal food and cash subsidies. Each day, more

than 3 million children begin their day with school breakfasts, and 27 million eat lunch at school.

Over half a million children get day care meals with Federal help. And more than 700,000 young children and 339,000 infants benefit from food supplements provided through a special program serving low-income women and children. In addition, many of the 15.6 million individuals who are aided through food stamps are children.

Activities being planned

In honor of the International Year of the Child, the Food and Nutrition Service is planning a variety of activities to focus attention on child nutrition. Among them are these:

- National School Lunch Week will have as its theme, "Nutrition with love," and children will be celebrating the week in schools throughout the country.

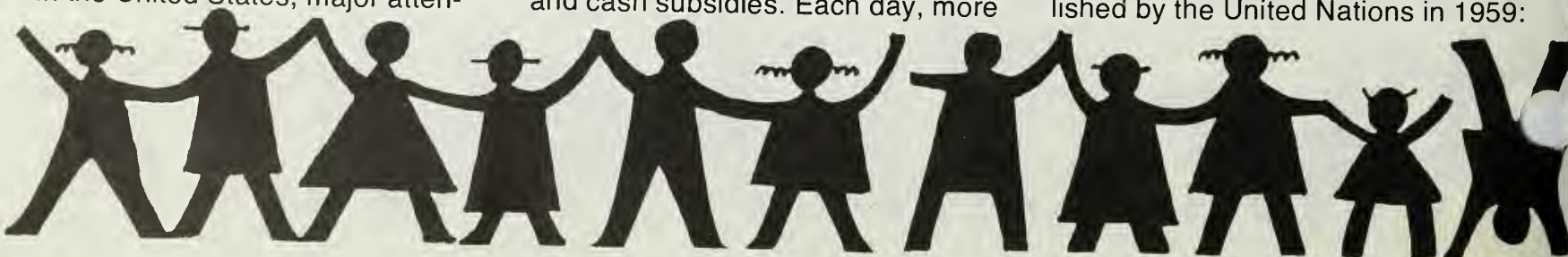
- The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children will release a special poster commemorating the Year and emphasizing the program's benefits to children.

- The 1979 Yearbook of Agriculture will be devoted to the topic of foods for children.

- A School Breakfast campaign will seek to inform parents and community leaders about the Federal help available for starting and operating school breakfast services.

Affirms rights of children

The International Year of the Child affirms the following rights, established by the United Nations in 1959:



- to affection, love and understanding
- to adequate nutrition and medical care
- to free education
- to full opportunity for play and recreation
- to name and nationality
- to special care, if handicapped
- to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster
- to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities
- to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood
- to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, and national or social origin

On June 28, 1978, President Carter announced the members of the National Commission on the International Year of the Child. They include educators, scientists, entertainers, and activists, all with particular commitments to children's causes. In his remarks, the President reminded the commission that there are serious problems among children even in the United States.

Will focus attention

The commission's task is to promote observance of the Year by focusing attention on all aspects of children's needs. They'll be working to coordinate our country's activities with those of other nations and with United Nations and international organizations such as UNICEF. They'll also be working to stimulate participation at every level through community, civic, State, regional, national, Federal, international, and private and professional organizations.

For more information

Persons and groups who are interested in commemorating the year with special projects may want to get the IYC Report, published monthly by the IYC Secretariat (866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017).

The Secretariat is also compiling a directory of IYC events, indexed by date, country, topic, and sponsoring organization. For further information, write the National Commission on the International Year of the Child, Room 6001, 726 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. □

by Chris Kocsis



School Food: Parents Can Make A Difference

• Shawnee Mission, Kansas.

Parents, students, teachers and school food service employees are working together in a community effort to fight heart disease. It revolves around a rigorous fitness program, with nutrition and health workshops for young and old. As part of the effort, schools are serving low-fat meals.

• Hartsdale, New York.

Concerned over the quality of school lunches, the local parent-teachers' association has convinced school administrators to revise the district's food management contract. They've eliminated certain foods, developed new menus increasing choices for students, and removed vending machines and sodas.

• East Lansing, Michigan.

Parents working with a school food service director have replaced whole milk with 2-percent milk, included whole wheat flour and breads, and substituted fruits canned in light syrups for fruits canned in medium and heavy syrups.

• Eastchester, New York.

The school district now has what amounts to a totally revamped lunch program thanks to local PTA's help. School officials wanted to improve the lunch service, which had been strictly a la carte since 1976, and they asked the PTA to get involved.

PTA members spent 3 weeks assessing the quality of food and students' buying habits. As a result of their recommendations, the district dropped the a la carte service, rejoined the National School Lunch Program, hired a management company, and with PTA assistance, wrote a contract controlling the types of foods to be served in the schools.



Across the country, local PTA's and parent groups are becoming more active in the operation of school food services. Like many school food service directors, these parents have become increasingly concerned about the foods we serve our children in schools and the problems of diet-related diseases. And with good reason.

Radical changes have taken place in the average American's diet since the turn of the century. Fresh fruits, vegetables and grains have been sidelined, while fats and sugars now make up at least 60 percent of the total caloric intake for many Americans, children and adults.

While there is evidence that this long-term trend may be changing in some families, for the most part the trend continues.

"Rather than eating well, most people are eating themselves to ill health," says Dr. Mark Hegsted, of the Department of Agriculture's Science and Education Administration. "Diet is a definite factor in heart disease, strokes, cancer, diabetes, hardening of the arteries and cirrhosis of the liver."

The child with poor diet today may very well become tomorrow's adult with diet-related disease. And, for some, tomorrow is not so far off. According to Hegsted, many diet-related diseases start early in life and can take 20 to 30 years to develop.

"Atherosclerosis begins in childhood and has been found to be well established in young men in their 20's," he says.

With a growing awareness of the importance of diet to health, parents in many areas are joining school food service directors to help improve food quality and reduce waste.

They're taking a look at the levels of sugar, salt, fat and additives in school breakfasts and lunches.

They're examining ways to encourage children to eat more and waste less. They're realizing children need

to learn about food and nutrition, and they're helping to teach them. They're working to make lunchrooms and serving areas cheerful and attractive.

In short, they're getting involved.

A look at one school

Lorraine Drexel, food service director in East Aurora, New York, has been working with an active parent group for the past year.

Interested in improving the nutritional quality of foods bought for and served at school, Drexel has been delighted with the results.

"There were a number of changes we wanted to make in the lunch program," she said, "but we really needed support from parent groups first. School boards and adminis-

trators listen to what parents have to say—they're the taxpayers. So, when the first parent group came forward, we jumped at the chance."

Together with Judy Dinning, leader of the group, Lorraine Drexel initiated changes slowly in order to see how students would react.

One thing built on another and by the end of the year, the two women had managed to drop chocolate milk from all the district's schools, halve the amount of sugar in cookies, drop snack foods from grade and middle schools, eliminate nitrites and offer special meals featuring new foods once a month.

"Cutting out the chocolate milk was really tough," said Lorraine Drexel, "and I wouldn't want to go through that again—but it worked." According



Food service director Lorraine Drexel helps an East Aurora youngster with lunch.

to the schools' records, 75 percent of the children in the district are now using 2 percent milk, and a surprising number of children in the grade school are drinking skim milk.

"I really wasn't concerned about chocolate milk until the parent group brought the issue up," the food service director added. "Parents were concerned that chocolate contains a chemical much like caffeine, theobromine, which is a stimulant to the nervous system. As I thought about it, I just decided it really had to go."

Another concern for the food service director—additives and preservatives. "I look at labels when I do my own shopping. I just don't buy anything without looking at the label. The things you find there are just amazing. Really, who needs a cereal with a shelf life of 3 years?"

Fewer kids skip lunch

Eliminating snack foods from the elementary and middle schools has paid off. "Our Type A lunch sales have increased," Drexel explained. "The students aren't filling up on cakes and cookies and then skipping lunch."

Both Lorraine Drexel and parent-activist Judy Dinning were sensitive to the significance of this increase in lunch sales. The bottom line on changes in school lunch programs begins with a dollar sign. "The one thing that was clear from the start," said Judy Dinning, "was that any changes would have to pay for themselves." The East Aurora lunch program, like most others, has to stand on its own.

"I had a salesman here the other day," Lorraine Drexel recalled. "He was telling me about the thousands of dollars other schools were making from selling snack foods I just won't sell. I got a lot of satisfaction out of telling him I don't need to sell those foods to make this program work."

Judy Dinning, who has been working with Lorraine Drexel for the past year, traces her interest in nutrition to

a seventh grade home economics teacher one of her children had several years ago. "I bought some books, and the more I learned, the more my interest grew," she said.

Dinning began the East Aurora parent group by putting together a list of about 15 friends interested in food and nutrition. They wrote a proposal listing specific concerns and submitted it first to the school administrator, then to the food service director.

At the same time, Dinning lined up a series of speakers on nutrition—a biochemist who spoke about food additives, a doctor who talked about hyperactivity, and a professor of food science who discussed athletes' special food needs. The sessions were open to the community and held

right after school. Each session drew over 100 people.

"The sessions proved people in the community were interested, and that helped build our case," Dinning said.

She began meeting with food service director Drexel about once a month. Gradually, changes began to take place.

Not everything worked. The meal of the month was a flop at the grade school level. "We went in there telling kids how good these meals were for them, and they rebelled," Judy Dinning said. "Kids are tired of people telling them to do things because it's good for them. This year we're trying a different approach."

New approach is more active

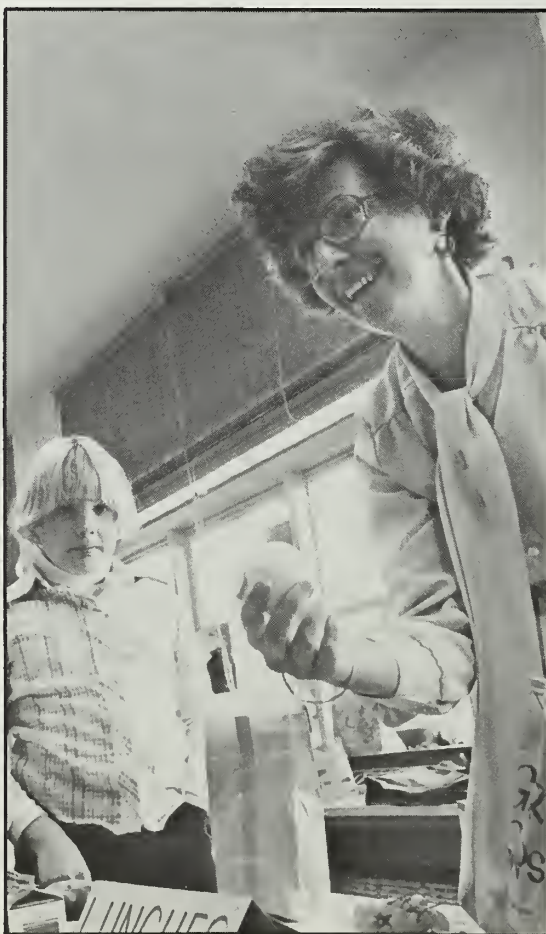
The new approach revolves around parents visiting classrooms, giving nutrition demonstrations and working on projects with students. "The teachers told us we needed to do more than just stand there and talk. We needed to actively *do* something, to demonstrate nutrition," said Dinning.

Giving this approach a try last June, a parent sallied into a fourth grade classroom armed with whole wheat bread and other foods. "The teacher figured the students' attention would last about 20 minutes," Judy Dinning recalled. "An hour and 15 minutes later, our parent had to fight to get out of the classroom. The kids were intrigued, and they overwhelmed her with questions."

Teachers will also be cooperating in this year's nutrition activities. Once a month, teachers will be conducting nutrition lessons emphasizing how the body works and what different foods do for you.

Making changes "is a process"

Both food service director Drexel and parent Dinning stressed that



Parent group leader Judy Dinning talks with students during a recent classroom visit.

making changes in school food services "is a process."

The first step for parents, according to Dinning, is to approach the school administrator and school food service manager. "State your case," she said. "Ask if it makes sense. Let them know you want to work with them on whatever problems there are."

"But remember," she added, "each school district is unique. Before trying to determine how to effect change, parents need to understand the particular situation they're dealing with."

"You have to be aware of the pressures on the school food service director and the financial demands he or she faces. You also have to remember that you're trying to change the way people think, and you can't mandate that. You really have to woo to win."

Judy Dinning feels that school food service managers can play a dynamic role in bringing about change. "They can exert terrific pressure to make changes in school food programs both at the national level and locally."

Working with the school board

Each school district *is* unique. In some cases, as with Lorraine Drexel, the food service director can respond directly to parents' concerns.

In other districts, however, only the school board will be in a position to initiate changes. The questions the board is likely to raise are the same questions which are of concern to the school administrator and dietician: What will these changes cost? How will we pay for them? What kind of community backing do we have?

Many districts find that changes can be made to existing food services without any additional funds. Certain changes cost nothing. Others pay for

themselves. In East Aurora, for example, by eliminating the snack foods which had competed with lunch, the district boosted lunch sales.

Sometimes districts need to reevaluate their entire lunch systems before initiating changes. Sometimes, too, they need to get community backing to pay the cost of improving the program.

Nancy Sherman, a parent in Montgomery County, Maryland, was concerned about the quality of food in the county's satellite food system. She started working with an independent parent group trying to make changes, but quickly became discouraged and sought out the local PTA. "I felt they'd have more clout," she said.

Remember that each school district is unique. Before trying to determine how to effect change, parents need to understand the particular situation they're dealing with. You have to be aware of the pressures on the school food service director and the financial demands she faces. You also have to remember that you're trying to change the way people think, and you can't mandate that. You have to woo to win.

Judy Dinning, parent group leader

PTA looks at county lunches

As a member of the PTA, Sherman worked on a committee assessing county lunches. The committee: surveyed schools in the county; talked with teachers, principals, parents, and students; got acquainted with local and national school food issues; attended Congressional hearings in Washington; and met with Assistant

Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman.

The meeting with Foreman convinced Sherman that to be effective, the group had to take a hard look at how policies are made in the county.

"We realized we had to know who makes the decisions and reach those people," said Sherman. "We realized the way to effect change was through the school board and city council."

Soon after the meeting, Sherman and the PTA committee prepared a report for the school board, outlining recommendations based on their assessment of the county food system. The report was approved by the county PTA and submitted to the school board.

Recommendations reflect concern

The committee's recommendations reflected not only their concern with the county's satellite food system but also with issues being raised by parent groups in growing numbers throughout the country. Major recommendations were to:

1. Hire an outside consultant to study costs of preparing meals in individual school kitchens rather than having them pre-prepared and delivered to schools in what's known as a satellite system.
2. Stop expanding the satellite system until the study is complete.
3. Encourage schools to include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and avoid processed foods whenever possible.
4. Cut down on the use of salts, fats, and additives.
5. Make lists of ingredients used in meals available on request.

While changes in food policy can be made through local school boards, said Nancy Sherman, the people who have to make them work are the local dieticians and school food service employees.

The key is to work together and establish a broad base of community support.

"Many changes don't require the

allocation of more money," she said. "What's needed is more thought to the foods we buy and serve our children."

PTA parents get involved

Many parents concerned about foods in their schools have been turning to their local PTA's.

This year, the National PTA will be working with the Food and Nutrition Service to get parents and students more involved in local school breakfast and lunch operations.

Last January, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman, wrote a letter to PTA President Grace Baisinger, expressing her belief that community involvement is essential to effective school food service.

"The National PTA," she wrote, . . . "is ideally suited to take a leadership role [because of] its broad membership of both parents and teachers . . . and long experience in dealing with local school districts.

In response, PTA President Baisinger named a task force on child nutrition. In cooperation with members of the Food and Nutrition Service, the task force will be working on a film documenting parent efforts to improve school food programs. To be distributed to PTA's throughout the country, the film will kick off a national convention on child nutrition as well as a series of national and local activities throughout the 1979-80 school year.

Focusing on food quality

The October issue of PTA Magazine focused on concerns about quality of school food. In the following interview, which appeared in that issue, Carol Foreman discussed Federal efforts to make changes in school food services.

"First of all," Ms. Foreman said, "let's look at the things that we [the federal government] can do.

"For one thing, we have proposed new meal patterns.

"Right now the size of the portions of the school lunch is directed at a 12-year old. That's fine if you're 12, but if you're six, it's too much food, and if you're 16, it's not enough food.

"So we've proposed five portion sizes: smaller ones for the younger children and larger ones for the older children. We believe that this change, in and of itself, will reduce plate waste.

"We've tried to introduce more variety into the Type A school lunch—more substitutes for bread and potatoes.

"We've urged the reduction of salt and sugar and fat in the school lunch.

"We can also provide more training and more equipment assistance for school lunch personnel. And that's very important. . . .

"We've tried to expand the variety of commodities that we offer. And we're trying to improve the quality of some of the commodities that have been criticized in the past.

"We can help school food service personnel by training them—by helping them to use more efficiently the materials that they do have.

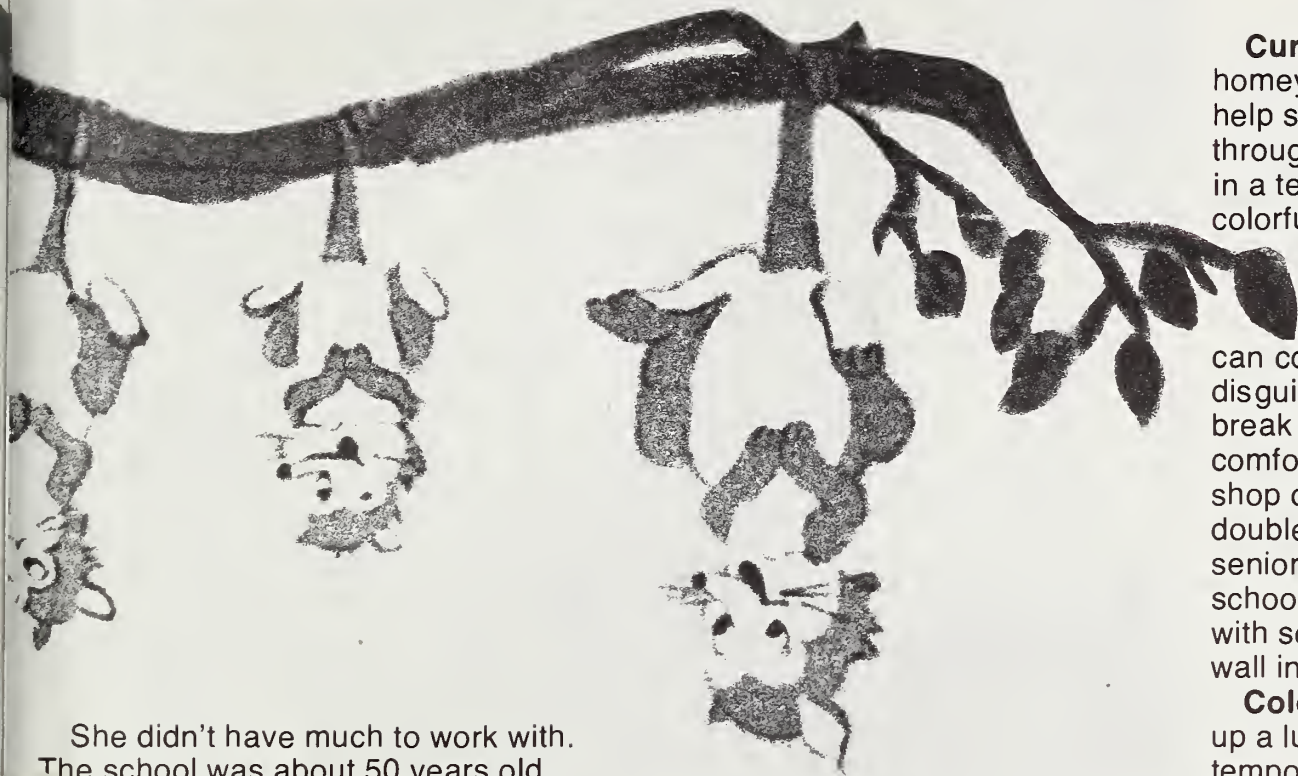
"But we can't, for example, make sure that the children have enough time to eat. We can't make sure that they have a pleasant place in which to eat and that they can get their food within a reasonable period of time—without getting frustrated and angry.

"Only local people can make sure that the quality of the food is good. We at the Federal level can check for the nutrients. We can check to see that the schools have all the portion sizes that they require. But only local people can be involved, day to day, to see if the food is really attractive and edible. And those are important, terribly important, things." □

by Dianne D. Jenkins



School Cafeterias: A Little Imagination Goes A Long Way



She didn't have much to work with. The school was about 50 years old, and the room had exposed pipes running along its concrete-block wall. But with a little paint furnished by the PTA and a lot of imagination, one interested parent at Mountain View Elementary in Cobb County, Georgia, turned the cafeteria into a colorful fantasy world of playful cartoon animals.

Although Anna Hinton worked alone on this project, she was really in good company. In schools across the country, people are recognizing that the atmosphere in the school cafeteria is almost as important as the food served. And they're taking steps to make sure that the lunchroom environment adds to, rather than detracts from, the food service.

Often equipped with more enthusiasm than money, parents, students, teachers, principals and school food service staffs are working together to turn plain, drab eating and serving areas into colorful, attractive interiors. Art and shop classes are picking up paint brushes and hammers, taking on ambitious projects in their own schools, as well as in neighboring ones.

The result: cafeterias that are as fresh and appealing as the food. Here are some ideas that have worked in

other schools, and may work in yours.

Plants are popular decorator items in homes and restaurants, and they're beginning to appear in school cafeterias, too. Hanging baskets, in particular, are well-suited to lunchroom use.

Framed student artwork can be used to decorate eating areas—especially cafeterias which must do double-duty as auditoriums. Even the work of the youngest, most inexperienced artist takes on a polished look when it's framed.

Bulletin boards, familiar sights in most schools, provide an easy and inexpensive way to brighten up the cafeteria. They can be used to teach nutrition, post menus, or promote school activities. Student classes or clubs can compete to make the most attractive displays.

Table and countertop decorations are easy to make. They're another good way to involve students—especially younger ones—in lunchroom activities. For variety, these decorations can be changed often, according to the season or for special occasions and holidays.

Curtains or drapes add a nice, homey touch to the cafeteria, and help soften harsh light coming through large windows. One school in a textile manufacturing area used colorful bed sheets to make simple pull-back curtains for cafeteria windows.

Room dividers or screens can cover dull or unattractive walls, disguise garbage disposal areas, or break up large rooms into more comfortable units. One high school shop class built room dividers that double as planters to set off the seniors' eating area. In another high school, a long folding screen painted with school scenes decorates one wall in the teachers' eating area.

Colorful furniture really brightens up a lunchroom and gives it a contemporary look. **Booths and small tables** are less institutional-looking than long tables and allow teenagers to sit with their friends. **Attractive trays** in a variety of colors can also contribute to the overall look of the cafeteria. Using school colors and emblems on trays adds a special touch.

Large murals or individual painted figures or designs can make a striking difference in a cafeteria's appearance. In one primary school, children painted a large landscape of the surrounding area. But the most popular subjects for elementary school murals seem to be storybook characters and cartoon figures.

In high schools, wall paintings run the gamut, from abstract designs and fantasy landscapes to silhouettes of student leaders. School emblems and mascots are popular, and one school used the school's alma mater as the basis for a mural.

Don't forget ceilings—they can be decorated too. One high school in a carpet manufacturing area covered large plywood squares with different colored carpet scraps and suspended them from the ceiling for **sound barriers**. Another school hung **pennants**

in the school colors, and one imaginative manager used **kites**.

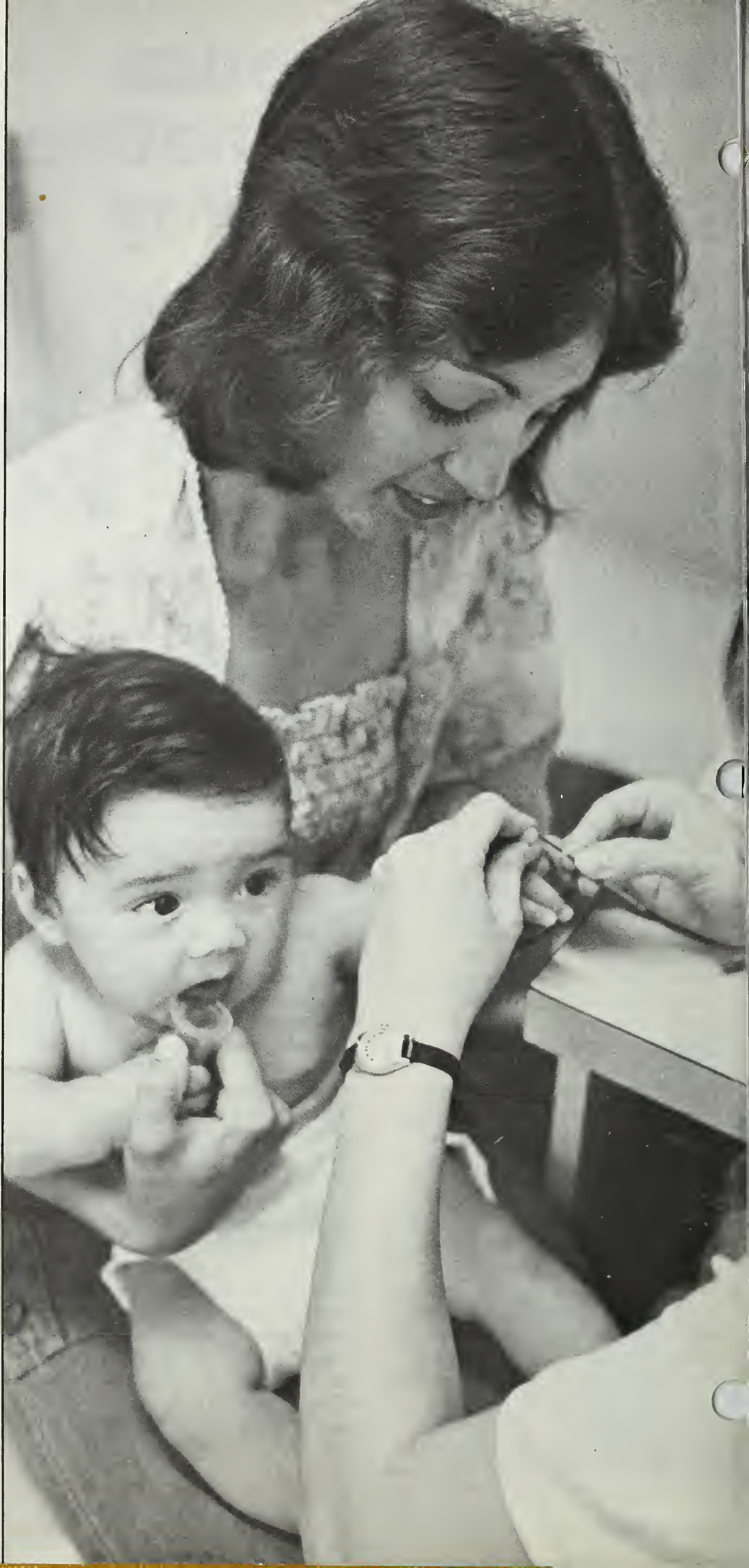
Music is a good mood-setter and can really improve the atmosphere of a cafeteria. Some schools have very simple arrangements. Others have jukeboxes or more sophisticated equipment, with students acting as disk jockeys.

The appearance of the school food service staff can make a big difference in the lunchroom environment.

Colorful uniforms or pretty aprons over plain white uniforms are both attractive and professional-looking, and for special occasions, **costumes** add a festive touch.

A few simple changes can go a long way toward improving the appearance of a cafeteria. And this, in turn, can make a big difference in a student's attitude toward the food service, and even the school as a whole. Making the changes can be fun—for parents and teachers as well as students. □

by Linda Klein



Meeting the Special Needs Of Migrants

"So Teodoro will grow up strong and well"

It was 10-week old Teodoro Salazar's first visit to the clinic at Berrien General Hospital in Niles, Michigan. But he and his mother, Benita Salazar, had visited several similar clinics on their way up north from Texas.

Teodoro and his mother are part of the country's largest migrant stream that travels yearly from Texas to the Midwest and northern parts of the United States to make money planting and harvesting crops.

They are also participants in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, often known as the WIC Program. At clinics like the one at Berrien General, they get special supplemental foods tailored to their particular dietary needs.

Benita also gets practical lessons in nutrition and food preparation, so she will understand the importance of nutritious foods and how to use them.

Food and education

The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children is a nationwide program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, now serving over a million participants at 4,500 clinics throughout the country. Expectant and nursing mothers, and children up to age 5 may take part. To be eligible, their health must be threatened by both low income and poor nutrition.

Administered by the Food and Nutrition Service in cooperation with State and local agencies, the Special Supplemental Food Program is one

of the few Federal programs which combines food assistance and nutrition education as an adjunct to good health care.

Special effort to help migrants

This year, the Food and Nutrition Service is conducting a special demonstration project to help migrant farmworkers, like Benita Salazar, utilize the Special Supplemental Food Program. Underway in 13 States, the project is testing a solution to one of the most difficult problems for migrants: how to continue getting the food assistance they need as they move from place to place.

For Benita Salazar, constant travel has been a way of life for as long as she can remember. Her permanent

home is in San Juan, a city near the southern edge of Texas, but each year she travels to Michigan and other States where there are crops to be picked. Her friends, relatives, and many of the people she knows also leave home each year to earn money to support their families.

"This year is different though," she said, looking at her small son. "Now I have somebody who depends on me. The money I make picking strawberries, apples, cherries and other crops will make things better for me and Teodoro."

Determined to get good care

Benita Salazar is determined Teodoro will get the best health care possible while they travel "so he will grow up strong and well."

"The last time I visited a clinic," Benita said, "I was told Teodoro had a low hemoglobin count so I am checking his health and getting the vouchers to purchase the food supplements he needs. I'll go to other clinics when we move because the people here say they can help correct this problem and I believe them."

As Benita Salazar moves on, she'll find it easy to get the special help Teodoro needs. Because she's a participant in the demonstration project, she has a special certification card which will enable her to continue getting food assistance without having to be recertified at every new site.

Cards valid for 6 months

All participants in the demonstration project get the cards when they



are first certified. The cards include their names, identification numbers, and certification criteria. They are valid for 6 months.

Whenever they move, participants simply present the cards at the nearest clinic operating the project.

Under the regular program, there is no uniform system used by local agencies. In some States, migrant farmworkers can transfer from one participating clinic to another without having to be recertified—unless, of course, their original certification has run out. In other States, migrant farmworkers have to be recertified at every new clinic.

The certification card is the key to providing continuous service to migrants during the project. For local clinics, it's also the key to keeping participation logs.

"All clinics taking part in the project are keeping track of who they serve and when," explains Jennifer Nelson, director of the Supplemental Food Programs Division in the Food and Nutrition Service. "The participation logs are valuable information-gathering tools which will give us access to the kind of information we need to improve services to migrants on a more long-term basis.

"The data from the logs will help us develop a profile of migrant participants," she continues. "We'll know more about the services they receive, where they are served, and where there are lapses in service as they move from one place to another."

Thirteen States are participating

Begun in February, the demonstration project is operating in a core of midcontinent States. The 13 par-

ticipating States form one of the main migrant streams in the country. For most midcontinent migrants, Texas is "home-base." During growing and harvesting seasons, they work their way north, sometimes traveling as far as Minnesota.

Twelve States have received a total of \$2.5 million in Federal funds for the project: Texas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Missouri is also participating but did not request additional U.S. Department of Agriculture funds.

In addition to the funds the Department of Agriculture has provided for the project, the Community Services Administration has provided a grant for particular expenses such as

“It’s always a problem convincing people—and not just migrant workers—that you cannot expect to be healthy if your primary diet is starch and soda pop.”

Bobbie Ryder, local project director

travel, printing costs, and evaluation.

Services expanded

Using the funds, the States have opened or expanded clinics in areas which generally have a large influx of migrant farmworkers. Participating clinics provide the same foods regularly offered through the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children. That is, depending on the age and nutritional needs of each mother and child, they prescribe monthly food packages of iron-fortified cereal, eggs, juice, and either milk or iron-

fortified infant formula, or cheese.

The clinics distribute the foods directly, or they give the mothers vouchers to exchange for specified items at authorized grocery stores.

Better nutrition understanding

One of the goals of the demonstration project is to develop a model for providing nutrition education to migrants. Participating clinics are testing a series of nutrition lessons in Spanish and English, designed to give progressively better nutrition understanding.

Geared to the needs and transient lifestyle of migrants, the lessons are part of a modular nutrition education curriculum developed especially for the project by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (The lessons are described in more detail in the accompanying article.)

Bobbie Ryder is local project coordinator for four sites in Michigan, including the one at Berrien General Hospital in Berrien Springs. For her, the nutrition lessons are one of the most exciting parts of the demonstration project.

"It's always a problem convincing people—and not just migrant farmworkers—that you cannot expect to be healthy if your primary diet is starch and soda pop," Ryder said.

The nutrition lessons help explain to migrants why poor diets can cause

problems like dental cavities or vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Education is vital

Most of the people who come to the clinics have inadequate diets, according to Ryder, often as a result of lack of nutritional knowledge. She be-

lieves making people more conscious of proper eating and nutritional practices is vital.

"We try hard to offer the best services possible to migrants and all other participants," said Ryder. "If we help improve a person's health and dietary patterns, we feel we are doing our job."

"The information and assistance provided can prevent diseases caused by malnutrition. Sometimes, a symptom that could lead to serious health problems is neglected only because a person does not know care is available. Through education, we hope to change that."

"We don't expect to perform miracles," the project coordinator said. "We know little things count toward a person's health. We are satisfied if we enhance the quality of life for Teodoro, and for others like him."

The project is expected to continue through the end of the year. By next spring, the Food and Nutrition Service expects to have results of an evaluation funded by the Community Services Administration. Conducted by an outside contractor, the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the services and nutrition education provided to migrants.

The information provided through the evaluation will help the Food and Nutrition Service determine the best ways to serve migrant farmworkers and their families in the future. □

by Frank Johnson

Mothers get practical lessons in nutrition

Learning about nutrition can be a challenge. For many migrant farmworking families, the challenge is



made greater by a transient lifestyle. Even if they have access to nutrition education activities, they are often rarely in a place long enough to participate for any length of time.

Through the demonstration project serving midwestern migrants, the Food and Nutrition Service is testing one approach to providing continuing nutrition education to migrant families. The approach is based on a series of 11 lessons, distributed to clinics participating in the project.

In English and Spanish

The nutrition education lessons are contained in five spiral-bound books, presented in the form of 19-1/2- by 15-inch flip charts.

On one side, the flip charts explain—in both English and Spanish—what foods to eat, and why those foods are important. On the facing side is a colorful graphic illustration of the text. The instructor reads or paraphrases the explanation, while the participant views the illustration.

The format is simple and direct, and the illustrations make the lessons easily understood even if the participant is unable to read or write.

Various topics are covered

The lessons focus on the particular needs of expectant and nursing mothers, infants and young children. For example, they stress the importance of eating nutritious foods during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. They explain the importance of foods rich in iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C. They cover formula preparation and the dietary needs of infants and children up to age 5.

Lesson 6, for instance, "Vitamin C is good for you," explains not only

what foods provide vitamin C, but also why the body needs it. "Vitamin C is needed for healthy blood vessels and skin . . . It is important for resisting infections and for healing wounds. Children's bones need vitamin C to grow strong and hard."

At the end of each segment are questions designed to test the participant's understanding of the lesson. For example, at the end of Lesson 11, "Good nutrition for your children," participants are asked, "What mineral do children need for healthy bones and teeth? What foods contain it?"

The answer is listed below the question: "Children need calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Calcium is found in foods in the milk group, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt."



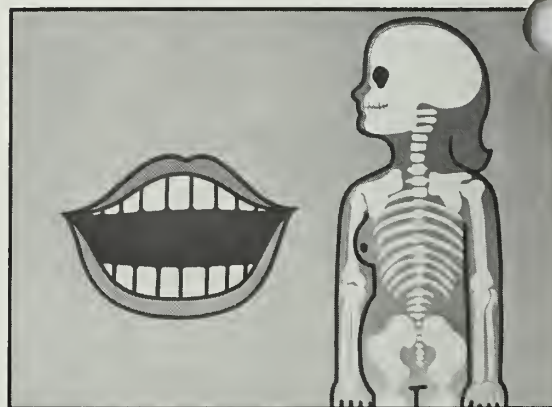
“Everyone needs a mineral called calcium to help build strong bones and teeth. Even as adults, we still need calcium to keep them strong.”

Lesson order based on need

Nutritionists try to cover at least one lesson during each visit, taking about 15 minutes for each lesson.

The order in which the lessons are given is based on the individual's need. If a migrant is currently breastfeeding, her first lesson is most likely to be Lesson 3, the segment on breastfeeding.

A woman feeding formula to her baby is most likely to first study Lesson 8, "General information on formula preparation." And, an expectant mother would start with Lesson 1, "Good eating habits before your baby is born." After completing the lessons for which she has the most obvious need, a woman can complete other lessons appropriate for her.



“You can make sure you're getting enough calcium by eating plenty of foods that are high in it. Milk is the best source of calcium. When you're pregnant, you should drink about a quart of milk a day. This can be any kind of milk—whole, 2 percent, skim, or buttermilk.”

The lessons are numbered, and each time a migrant completes a lesson, it is noted on her special certification card, so that she will then receive the followup lesson at the next WIC clinic she visits.

If more instruction on a particular segment is needed, that is also noted so the lesson can be continued.

To reinforce the lessons, each migrant also receives an abbreviated version of the flip charts to take home. It too is illustrated and in Spanish and English.

Studies helpful

In focusing on the nutritional needs of Mexican-American migrants, the Food and Nutrition Service gave particular attention to the findings of two

pertinent studies. One was the Ten-State Nutrition Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare. The other was a study conducted in South Texas by the University of Colorado Medical Center.

Both studies found that Mexican-Americans generally need more vitamins A, D, B1 and B2, folic acid, calcium, and iron. The studies also found widespread problems with obesity. Among the children, almost one-half had one or more dental cavities as a result of snacking on foods high in sugar.

The nutritionists, with the aid of the flip chart modules, encourage participants to eat more fresh fruits, vegetables, and juices, especially those rich in vitamins A and C. The hand-

outs participants take home list good sources for these vitamins, including ethnic favorites like tortillas, mangos, papayas and green peppers.

The nutritionists also urge migrant families to use more milk and milk products. Since cost and lack of refrigeration may limit migrants' consumption of milk, nutritionists encourage participants to use dry milk. The nutritionists stress the importance of eating a variety of foods and recommend participants eat only nutritious snacks.

WIC clinics are now providing input for the evaluation which will be completed early next spring. The nutrition lessons will be evaluated along with the rest of the migrant demonstration project.

by Johna Leigh Pierce



“Other good sources of calcium include cottage cheese, cheese, and yogurt. Your WIC package contains milk and cheese.”



“When you're pregnant, you need extra vitamin C for you and your baby. That vitamin C must come from the food you eat. Since vitamin C is not stored in your body, you have to eat foods that are high in vitamin C every day.”



“All of the vegetable and fruit juices available through the WIC Program have vitamin C. A 6-ounce serving of any of these juices will give you all of the vitamin C you need for the day.”

When you buy juice for your family, make sure the label says juice and not juice drink. For instance, you can buy orange juice with the WIC food voucher, but not orange drink. Other fruits that are good sources of vitamin C include strawberries, watermelon, cantaloupe, papayas, and mangos.”



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